Identify Cause and Effect

**Objective**
Identify what happened (effect) and why it happened (cause).

**Background**
Some stories tell the causes and effects of events that take place. An effect is what happens, and a cause is why it happens. Stories may include clue words, such as *so, because, as a result,* and *since,* that signal cause and effect. Readers can look for causes and effects in stories to help them understand what takes place and why it happens.

**Introduce**
Have students watch as you put food coloring in a vase of water. Add a fresh white carnation. After some time, ask students to observe the carnation. Ask them to describe what happened to the carnation and explain why it happened.

Help students explain that the flower petals are becoming colored because the flower stem is taking in the colored water. Tell students that they have identified an example of cause and effect. Explain that an *effect* is what happened and the *cause* is why it happened.

**Teach**
Explain that students can follow some simple steps to identify cause-and-effect relationships. Here’s what students can do to identify cause and effect as they read:

- Look for clue words, such as *so, because, as a result,* and *since,* that signal cause and effect.
- To identify effect, ask what happened.
- To identify cause, ask why it happened.
- Look for more than one cause of an effect.
- Look for more than one effect for a cause.

**Model**
Write this sentence on the board and read it aloud. Model how to identify the cause and effect.

_Sir Arthur Conan Doyle began writing because he had an unsuccessful medical practice._
Practice

Doyle’s famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, was able to solve mysteries, using logic and observation.

Remind students that sometimes clues words are not used to signal cause and effect. Then they can determine causes by asking what happened and effects by asking why it happened. Then have them identify cause and effect. **Cause:** used logic and observation. **Effect:** solved mysteries.

*The British fought the Boer War in the late 1800s and early 1900s.*

Arthur Conan Doyle worked to support the British war effort. In return, he was named a British knight in 1902.

Explain to students that an effect of one cause can be the cause of another effect. Remind students they can check for effects by asking what happened. They can check causes by asking why it happened. Then help students identify the causes and effects in the preceding sentences.

**Cause:** The British were fighting the Boer War. **Effect:** Doyle worked to support the war effort. **Cause:** Doyle worked to support the war effort. **Effect:** Doyle was knighted in 1902.

Reinforce

Use Student Edition pages 6, 22, 59, 70, 99, and 122 to reinforce the skill of identifying cause and effect.
Identify Story Elements

Objective
Recognize the characters, setting, and plot in a story.

Background
The parts of a story include the characters, setting, and plot. Characters are the people or animals in a story. They can be real or make-believe. Setting is the time and the place of the story. Plot is the action of the story. It is what happens in the story, and it is organized to move the story from a beginning to a middle to an end. The plot often involves a problem or conflict that reaches a climax, which is a point of high tension, or a turning point, and a resolution to the conflict.

Introduce
Choose a story familiar to all students. The story might be a fairy tale they are all familiar with or a story that they have recently read in class.

Write the words Who? Where? When? and What? on the board. Tell students to listen to the story as you summarize it. After you complete the summary, help students answer the question words you wrote on the board. Write and review the answers and tell students that they have just identified story elements by naming characters, setting, and plot.

Teach
Tell students that the characters, setting, and plot make up a story. Define each term for students, using the definitions given in the “Background” section. Explain that students can recognize characters, setting, and plot in a story as they read.

• Look for the names of characters.
• Look for words and phrases that describe the characters.
• Think about what the characters say, feel, or do.
• Look for details that name or describe the place and time in which the story takes place.
• Think about whether the setting is specific or general.
• Look for the sequence of events that move the story from beginning to middle to end.
• Look for a problem or conflict, a climax, and the way the problem is solved.
Model
Write this brief story on the board and read it aloud. Model how to identify characters.

*It was dinnertime, and the whole family had gathered. Brad was so anxious and impatient. He could barely wait to share his good news with the entire family, but he had to wait until it was his turn to tell about his day. Sarah droned on about her history project. Brad thought she would never stop talking. Anthony talked about how his team won the volleyball game. Mom and Dad congratulated him, and Sarah and Brad clapped. Finally, everyone turned to Brad. “How was your day, Brad?” Mom asked. Brad started to say really grand, but then he just blurted out, “I won! I won the poetry contest, and the teacher said my poem will be published in the newspaper.” Everyone at the table cheered and applauded. They all agreed that it was wonderful to have a published poet in the family.*

I see the story focuses on a family, naming the three children—Brad, Sarah, and Anthony—and Mom and Dad. The main character is Brad, who is very excited to tell the family his good news, but he must wait his turn. I think he is too excited to really listen to the others at the table.

Tell students that you have just identified the characters in the story. Explain to them that they can use the story to identify the setting and plot, as well as the characters.

Practice
Use the story about Brad to review characters and to identify setting and plot. Ask questions, if necessary, to guide the process.

For characters, ask: Who is the main character in the story? Why is he excited? For setting, ask: Where does the action of the story take place? When does the story take place? For plot, ask: How does the story begin? What does Brad want to do? Why can’t he do it? How does the story end?

Reinforce
Use Student Edition pages 7, 23, and 82 to reinforce the skill of identifying story elements.